

Message Text

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62

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /091 W

----- 058686

R 312320Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5627

C O N F I D E N T I A L SYDNEY 1602

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, AS

SUBJ: SENATOR JOHN L. CARRICK VIEWS THE LABOR GOVERNMENT

1. IN CONVERSATION TWO DAYS AGO, SENATOR CARRICK, N.S.W. LIBERAL SENATOR, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IS GOING THROUGH A VERY CRITICAL PERIOD, THE OUTCOME OF WHICH IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR. HE TOUCHED ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) THE RESULTS OF THE LAST FEDERAL ELECTION PROVE WHAT HE HAD SAID BEFORE THE DOUBLE DISSOLUTION; NAMELY, THAT IT WAS BADLY TIMED. NEVERTHELESS, HE BELIEVES THE SITUATION IS NOT UNFAVORABLE FROM THE LIBERAL/COUNTRY PARTY (L/CP) POINT OF VIEW.

(B) CARRICK THOUGHT THE L/CP MIGHT HAVE WON THE LAST ELECTION HAD THEY BEEN PREPARED TO WAGE THE CAMPAIGN ON A FAR BROADER BASIS THAN THE ONE-SHOT ISSUE OF INFLATION WHICH WAS NOT THEN RIPE. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES ELECTIONS ARE DETERMINED MORE BY THE POLITICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE POPULACE AT THE TIME THE ELECTION IS CALLED RATHER THAN THE VERBAL TIDES WASHED UP BY THE CAMPAIGN.

(C) CARRICK NOT ONLY BELIEVES WHITLAM EMERGED IN A
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REDUCED POSITION, BUT HE SUSPECTS THE ALP LEFT WING IS

DELIBERATELY LOOKING TOWARD WHITLAM'S EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT BY CAIRNS. HE MENTIONED SENATOR BROWN'S ATTACK ON AMBASSADOR GREEN AS ONE FACET OF SUCH A CAMPAIGN. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT AT FIRST BROWN MIGHT HAVE BEEN DUPED BY THOSE WHO FAILED TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING HIS CHARGES, HE IS TODAY INCLINED TO SUSPECT THAT CAIRNS HIMSELF MAY BE STIMULATING SENATOR BROWN. CARRICK HAS NO SPECIFIC EVIDENCE BUT POINTS OUT THAT BROWN'S RENEWAL OF HIS CHARGES OVER THE WEEKEND SUGGESTS THAT IT IS MORE THAN A SIMPLE PERSONAL ABERRATION. MOREOVER, CARRICK BELIEVES THAT IN THE PAST BROWN HAS BEEN A MOST COMPETENT CHAIRMAN OF THE ALP CAUCUS, AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKER AND A STABLE WHILE NOT DEEP THINKER. UNLESS BROWN HAS SUFFERED SOME MENTAL DAMAGE PERHAPS IN CONNECTION WITH A SEVERE CORONARY LAST YEAR, CARRICK BELIEVES BROWN SHOULD BE REGARDED AS MORE DELIBERATE THAN GULLIBLE AND PERHAPS FRONTING FOR CAIRNS.

(D) THERE IS OBVIOUSLY DISUNITY WITHIN THE ALP ON HOW TO HANDLE INFLATION AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME LEFT WING ELEMENTS WILL SEEK TO USE THE ANTI-INFLATION LABEL AS A COVER FOR WHAT IS REALLY INTENDED TO BE A LONG-RANGE DEVICE TO RE-DISTRIBUTE INCOME. CARRICK MENTIONED STATEMENTS BY CAIRNS IN THIS CONNECTION. CAIRNS HAS "SNOWED" THE BUSINESSMEN OF AUSTRALIA WHO TEND TO SUPPORT HIM DESPITE THE ULTIMATE THREAT WHICH HIS IDEOLOGY POSES TO THEM.

(E) CARRICK BELIEVES THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT GO ITS FULL THREE YEARS. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THERE MUST BE AN ELECTION OF HALF THE SENATE WITHIN ABOUT 20 MONTHS AND THERE IS EVERY PROSPECT THAT THIS OCCASION COULD BECOME A DOUBLE DISSOLUTION.

(F) WITH REGARD TO THE FORTHCOMING JOINT SESSION, HE BELIEVES WHITLAM WILL "POUR IT ON US IN THE SENATE THIS WEEK" IN HIS DETERMINATION TO FORCE ALL SIX CERTIFIED BILLS TO COME BEFORE THE JOINT SESSION NEXT WEEK. HE DOUBTED THAT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL WOULD DISALLOW THE MINERALS EXPLORATION BILL, BUT WOULD LET THE LEGAL ISSUES REST ENTIRELY WITH THE COURT. EVEN IF ALL SIX BILLS ARE PASSED BY THE JOINT SESSION, CARRICK POINTS OUT THAT MOST

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REQUIRE ENABLING LEGISLATION OF VARIOUS KINDS WHICH CAN BE AND PROBABLY WILL BE DEFEATED IN THE SENATE WHEN THE TIME COMES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LEGISLATORS, PERSONAL OPINION, LABOR POLICY LINE, POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SYDNEY01602
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740209-0023
From: SYDNEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974071/aaaaaaje.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUL 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENATOR JOHN L. CARRICK VIEWS THE LABOR GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, AS, (CARRICK, JOHN L)
To: CANBERRA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005